

I yield back the remainder of my time.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS—S. 311

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators INOUE, KENNEDY and FEINGOLD be added as cosponsors to S. 311.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSOR—S. 258 AND S. 312

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator FEINGOLD be added as a cosponsor of S. 258 and S. 312.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

SOLDIERS', SAILORS', AIRMEN'S AND MARINES' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT OF 1999

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of S. 4, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 4) to improve pay and retirement equity for members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I first wish to inquire of our colleague if he felt he had adequate time to conclude his remarks. If not, I think we could accommodate him. Could someone ask the Senator to return momentarily?

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator will yield, the Senator from Illinois did indicate to me he had completed. Thank you for your concern.

Mr. WARNER. Thank you.

Mr. President, we are ready to resume. I see the Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I think the Senator from Idaho has an amendment, after which I would like to be recognized to talk about an amendment as well.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the distinguished Senator.

Mr. President, fortunately we have a flurry of activity on this bill. We have an amendment to be offered momentarily by our distinguished colleague from Idaho. There are some 21 amendments that have been made known to the managers, Mr. LEVIN and myself. And I am confident we can make some strong gains today on this bill.

The leadership—and I presume in consultation with the Democratic leader—desire a vote at the conclusion of

our two luncheon caucuses today. So after further consultation with the leadership, I think they will direct me to seek from the Senate an understanding that we will vote at about 2:15 on the amendment of the Senator from Idaho.

Mr. President, before we proceed further on the bill this morning, I would like to—each day as the bill is brought up, I am going to address what I call the overnight constructive criticism that is brought to bear on this piece of legislation. And I ask unanimous consent to have printed in today's RECORD an editorial from the Washington Post, dated Tuesday, February 23, 1999, entitled "Bad Bill in the Senate."

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 23, 1999]

BAD BILL IN THE SENATE

The Senate this week is scheduled to debate a showy military pay and pension bill whose enactment many members realize would be a mistake but which no one in either party seems prepared to oppose. The Republican leadership ordered it split off from the rest of the defense authorization bill to make it the first substantive bill of the year.

The goal is to demonstrate that Republicans do indeed have a legislative agenda, and to take back from the president a defense spending issue that Republicans regard as their own. He too proposed pay and pension increases in his budget. His were already more generous, particularly as to pensions, than military personnel needs can justify. No matter; the bill, which most Democrats as well as all Republicans on the Armed Services Committee supported, is more generous still.

The services are having trouble with both recruitment and retention in a strong economy. The pay raises in the bill may well be justified in light of this, and help the services compete. The pension proposals are the problem. They would undo a hard-won reform that Ronald Reagan joined in enacting in 1986, one purpose of which was to save money, another to improve retention. The system this bill would restore was dropped because it was thought to encourage experienced people to leave the service, not stay.

The estimated cost when fully effective is in the neighborhood of \$5 billion a year. The effect, if it happens, will be to squeeze other parts of the military budget that themselves are already tighter than they should be. The current uniformed chiefs, who support the step in part as a way of boosting morale, may not regret it, but their successors will.

Last year the leaders of the Armed Services Committee cautioned against a costly pension increase until the issue could be studied. Several major studies are soon to be completed, yet, for the flimsiest political reasons, the bill is being rushed to a vote without them. A hurry-up vote on an enormously costly bill with little to back it up can't possibly be good politics. It surely isn't good policy. It's especially not good defense policy. A vote in favor will make the opposite of the showing the leadership intends.

Mr. WARNER. I will not take up too much time of the Senate here today, but I welcome constructive criticism, such as forwarded by this piece and others. And I am ready to meet it head on and reply and explain exactly what it is that this Senator intends to achieve through this bill.

We are faced every day that we get up with fewer and fewer young men and women willing to sign on the dotted line and take up an initial career in the U.S. military, and it is very serious for all the services. Every day we wake up, fewer and fewer men and women who have been in the services, who have received—in many instances, pilots the most notable—an extraordinary taxpayer investment in their training, are not seeking the opportunity to remain in the services. We have to address these two "hemorrhaging" problems. That is the purpose for driving this bill through.

I am confident when we emerge in conclusion of this bill, and we come to the final passage, we will probably have a better shaped instrument than is before the Senate at this time, but that shaping has to take place on this floor with constructive criticism such as the editorial sets forth.

This bill was driven by the testimony of the Chairman and the members of the Joint Chiefs in September and again in January.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD statements of the Chairman and Members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RETIREMENT

GEN. HENRY H. SHELTON, USA, CHAIRMAN OF
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

September 29, 1998

First, we need to fix the so-called REDUX retirement system and return the bulk of our forces to a program that covers our most senior members—that is, a retirement system that provides 50 percent of average base pay upon completion of 20 years of service.

If we fail to address these critical personnel issues, we will put at risk one of our greatest achievements for the last quarter century, the all volunteer force.

It is the quality of the men and women who serve that sets the U.S. military apart from all potential adversaries. These talented people are the ones who won the Cold War and insured our victory in Desert Storm. These dedicated professionals make it possible for the United States to accomplish the many missions we are called on to perform around the world every single day.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that the troops and their families appreciate this very much. But as I have noted that alone will not be enough. As we develop the Fiscal Year 2000 budget proposal, we will take a hard look on what must be done on core compensation issues such as pay and retirement to maintain the quality of the people in the military. No task is more important in my view.

January 5, 1999

The ideal here would be the full retirement system. However the triad that we referred to we consider to be very important, and the reason in our recommendation initially was to go with the 50 percent retirement with the COLA, the CPI minus 1 percent retirement with a 2 percent floor, was because the full retirement was a very expensive system to restore and we wanted to make sure that we, in fact, could have money to apply to pay reform because we think that is very important too, that we reward performance vice just longevity and put it in those mid-grades